

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES

Key Findings: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United Kingdom, United States

Labor force participation rates in the United States, and the six other G8 countries shown, increased with educational attainment. Women participated in the labor force at a lower rate than men in all these countries.

In the United States and the six other G8 countries examined, labor force participation rates increased with educational attainment in 2001. Of adults ages 25 to 64 in the United States who completed upper secondary education (high school or its equivalent), 79 percent participated in the labor force in 2001 (figure 5a). This was 15 percentage points higher than the labor force participation rate of adults who did not complete upper secondary education.

Among the three G8 countries that include only academic general programs in upper secondary education (Canada, Japan, and the United States), the gap in labor force participation between completers of upper secondary education relative to those who did not complete upper secondary education was lower in the United States than in Canada (18 percentage points), but higher than the corresponding gap in Japan (6 percentage points). For the four G8 countries where upper secondary education includes academic programs as well as programs that lead to higher vocational-technical education or directly to the labor market, the gap in labor force participation between completers of upper secondary education relative to those with less education ranged from 16 percentage points in Germany to 24 percentage points in the United Kingdom.

In 2001, adults ages 25 to 64 in the United States and Canada who completed academic higher education participated in the

labor force at a rate of 86 percent. This was 7 percentage points higher than the labor force participation rate of completers of upper secondary education in both countries. For countries that include only academic general programs in upper secondary education, the gap in labor force participation rates of completers of academic higher education relative to those with upper secondary education was lower in the United States and Canada than in Japan (12 percentage points). For countries where upper secondary education includes academic programs as well as programs that lead to higher vocational-technical education, or directly to the labor market, the gap in labor force participation between completers of upper secondary education relative to those with academic higher education ranged from 5 percentage points in France to 12 percentage points in Germany.

In all the countries presented, females who completed upper secondary education or academic higher education had lower labor force participation rates than their male counterparts in 2001 (figure 5b). However, the difference between the labor force participation rates of males and females was smaller among those who had completed academic higher education than among those who had completed upper secondary education. Females who completed academic higher education participated in the labor force at a rate of at least 81 percent in all countries except Japan, where 68 percent of women who completed academic higher education participated in the labor force. In the United States, the difference in labor force participation rates of males and females who completed upper secondary education was 13 percentage points; the difference for completers of academic higher education was lower at 11 percentage points.

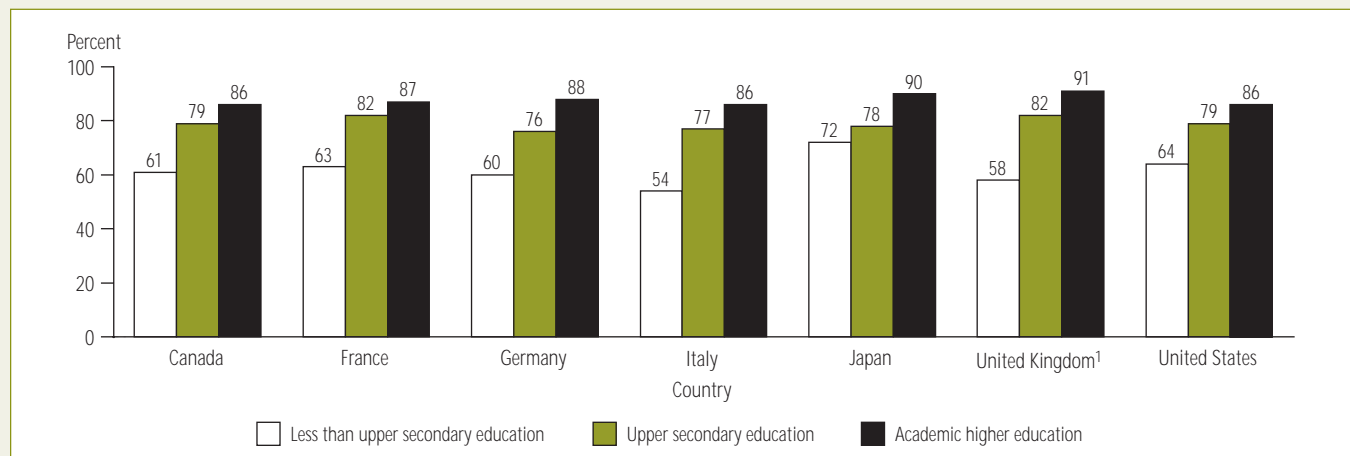
Definitions and Methodology

The labor force participation rate of adults ages 25 to 64 for a particular level of educational attainment is calculated as the number of individuals ages 25 to 64 with the particular level of educational attainment who are participating in the labor force divided by the number of individuals ages 25 to 64 with the same particular level of educational attainment, regardless of employment status.

Educational levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Less than upper secondary education is defined as preprimary, primary, and lower secondary education for all countries. Upper secondary programs in

Canada, Japan, and the United States are classified as 3A and are designed to provide access to tertiary academic education. Upper secondary programs in France include academic programs (3A), programs that lead to higher vocational-technical education (3B), and those that directly lead to the labor market (3C). In Germany upper secondary includes 3A programs as well as 3B. Italy and the United Kingdom include both 3A and 3C programs in upper secondary education. Academic higher education refers to ISCED level 5A (academic higher education-first stage) and ISCED level 6 (academic higher education-second stage/ doctoral studies) for all countries. For a complete description of the ISCED levels, see the appendix.

Figure 5a. Labor force participation rates of adults ages 25 to 64, by highest level of education and country: 2001

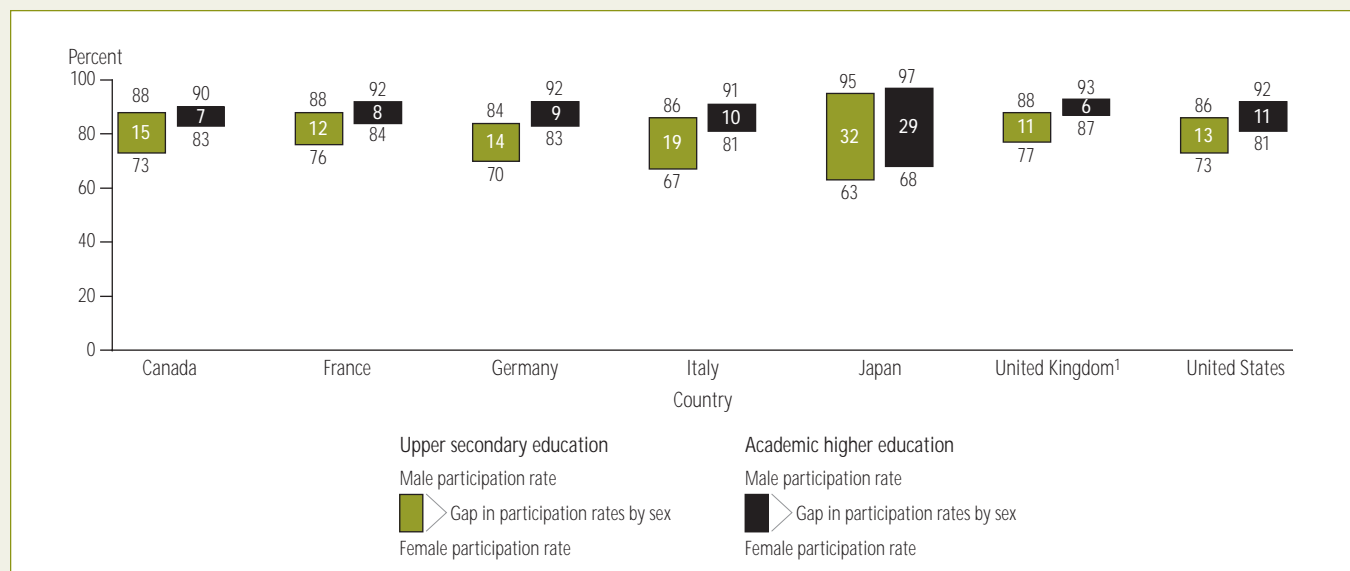


¹The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

NOTE: Education levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Less than upper secondary education is defined as preprimary, primary, and lower secondary education for all countries. Upper secondary programs in Canada, Japan, and the United States are classified as 3A and are designed to provide access to tertiary academic education. Upper secondary programs in France include academic programs (3A), programs that lead to higher vocational-technical education (3B), and those that directly lead to the labor market (3C). In Germany, upper secondary includes 3A programs as well as 3B. Italy and the United Kingdom include both 3A and 3C programs in upper secondary education. Academic higher education refers to ISCED level 5A (academic higher education-first stage) and ISCED level 6 (academic higher education-second stage/ doctoral studies) for all countries. For more information on ISCED levels, see the appendix.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2003). Labor Market Statistics Database, 2002.

Figure 5b. Labor force participation rates of adults ages 25 to 64, by sex, highest levels of education, and country: 2001



¹The United Kingdom includes England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

NOTE: Education levels are defined according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Upper secondary programs in Canada, Japan, and the United States are classified as 3A, and lead to a higher level general education. Upper secondary programs in Canada, Japan, and the United States are classified as 3A and are designed to provide access to tertiary academic education. Upper secondary programs in France include academic programs (3A), programs that lead to higher vocational-technical education (3B), and those that directly lead to the labor market (3C). In Germany, upper secondary includes 3A programs as well as 3B. Italy and the United Kingdom include both 3A and 3C programs in upper secondary education. Academic higher education refers to ISCED level 5A (academic higher education-first stage) and ISCED level 6 (academic higher education-second stage/ doctoral studies) for all countries. For more information on ISCED levels, see the appendix.

SOURCE: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). (2003). *Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2003*, Table A.12.1.